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ECNN, IN

SUBJECT: THE NEW UTTAR PRADESH GOVERNMENT WANTS CLOSE U.S.
TIES

Classified By: Political Counselor Ted Osius for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

1, (C) Summary: In the aftermath of the recent Uttar Pradesh (UP) election, Chief Minister Mayawati quickly moved to establish her BSP government, implement an ambitious shake-up of the government, restore law and order and lay the groundwork for economic development. During the election campaign, Mayawati's right hand man and BSP General Secretary SC Mishra met several times with EMBoffs and signaled his party's intention to establish close working relations with the Mission and the USG should it come to power. With an unassailable majority in the Legislative Assembly, Mayawati could complete a full five-year term in office and implement a long-term program to revive the troubled state. On June 15, a four-person Embassy delegation (Polcouns, Poloff, Deputy AID Director, and AIDOff) went to the UP capital Lucknow to lay the groundwork for what could possibly develop into a strong working relationship between the USG and India's most populous state. The visit received ample and positive press coverage in both the English and vernacular presses and on television, with Mishra and UP Speaker Sukhdev [IV. Rajvahr](#) pledging their government's total commitment to cooperation. Embassy plans to send a larger delegation to Lucknow in September for a week-long public diplomacy outreach program that could include a meeting with Mayawati. End Summary.

Power Packed Agenda

¶2. (C) While in Lucknow, the Embassy delegation had ample opportunities to meet with a cross-section of the state's movers and shakers and opinion leaders, including high-ranking leaders of the ruling BSP. They attended a public event sponsored by the Innovations in Family Planning Services Project (IFPS), had tea with a group of approximately 10 local journalists, toured a prominent madrassa established by the Barelvi sect of Islam, met with prominent local businessman and BSP financial backer Mukesh Jashnani, met Additional Home Secretary Javaid Ahmed, addressed a public gathering of the Indo-US Friendship Group,

and had a personal meeting with BSP General Secretary SC Mishra. USAID officials met separately with Health Minister Secretary Anand Kumar Misra. The "Chief Guest" at the

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Indo-US Friendship Group event was Sukhdev V. Rajvahr, the Speaker of the UP Legislative Assembly. Rajvahr shared the dais with PolCouns, the Deputy AID Director and Poloff. Although not an English speaker, Rajvahr addressed the audience in English, publicly committing his government to doing whatever necessary to smooth the way for close ties with the USG. Mishra made similar pledges during his private meeting, ensuring the delegation that Mayawati was looking forward to a future meeting with the Ambassador.

Changed Atmospherics

¶3. (C) Previous visits to Lucknow were characterized by doom and gloom. Most Lucknow contacts complained about the general lack of law and order in the state, as well as the all-pervasive corruption, lack of economic development and declining social and economic indicators. The atmospherics had changed completely during this visit. Interlocutors almost universally agreed that Mayawati had gotten off to a strong start and was addressing their concerns. They pointed to a number of positive developments that had given them room for encouragement and agreed that UP stands poised at a crucial juncture and has been presented with an opportunity to turn around.

--Mayawati almost immediately cleansed the state police force of "gunmen" loyal to former Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav. Many were inducted by the previous government without

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testing or vetting and were members of Singh's Yadav caste. The reformed police force had begun to arrest the notorious criminals operating in collusion with the previous administration. Many professional gangsters have gone underground or "left the state." The streets were now safe and businessmen no longer face extortion from mafias working for the SP.

--She had jailed one MP and one MLA for corruption and other charges. The MP had gone underground to avoid arrest for forcefully expropriating land from villagers and bulldozing their homes. She ordered him to appear at her residence, where he was arrested by waiting policemen.

--Several SP MLAs approached Mayawati and asked to join her party. She announced that she had done background checks on them and that most faced felony charges and she would not induct criminals into her party. Mayawati further stated that the BSP would not play "the defection game" of buying MLAs from other parties to shore up her majority. Those wanting to cross over to the BSP would first have to pass background checks, then resign from the other party and run for re-election on a BSP ticket.

--Mayawati dispatched her public works Minister to inspect projects in Lucknow. Unlike previous Ministers, he went inside pipelines underground. Once inside the pipes he discovered that the concrete was little more than sand and the pipes disintegrated when touched. He then measured the thickness of asphalt on city streets and determined it to be only one third what was contracted for. Concluding that 17 civil service engineers had defrauded the UP government of three billion rupees (\$7.8 million), he ordered their immediate arrest.

High Level Assurances

¶4. (C) SC Mishra told the delegation that the BSP was "fully committed" to its economic agenda and instituting good

governance and that everyone in the government had been told to be prepared for "18 hour days" until things were up and running. The Chief Minister purportedly calls government offices at random to ensure that the civil servants are at their desks and at work. Anyone unaccounted for faces dismissal. Mishra noted that he had told Mayawati prior to the BSP election victory that it would take some time to turn things around, but he had since discovered that things "were easier" than he had anticipated. According to Mishra, the new government was changing the focus to the countryside and was ensuring that rural schools were up and running, all teachers present and at work, had raised teachers' salaries and benefits to ensure performance, ensured that rural health clinics were open, and had opened a recruitment drive to convince good doctors to serve in the villages. The principal focus is primary education, to ensure that the state has an educated workforce. The BSP government also plans to open new universities throughout the state, and would like "tie-ups" with American universities. The state government is also committed to providing the necessary basic infrastructure and is implementing a plan to overcome the power shortfall by building new powerplants and ending power theft and transmission losses. Mishra was confident that Uttar Pradesh would become an attractive destination for US investors when corruption had been brought under control, infrastructure needs met (especially power generation), law and order established and maintained, and the workforce educated.

National Vision

15. (C) Mishra then confirmed that the BSP planned to make

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Mayawati Prime Minister in the upcoming 2009 election. He claimed that the party was expanding into other states and planned to pick up large numbers of MPs in the contest. Mishra emphasized that the BSP had demonstrated that high castes and Dalits could work together and that the goal was to create a "casteless society" in India. The BSP was also committed to secularism and would combat the communal BJP and create a grand coalition of all castes and religions into a party dedicated to social justice.

"America Week" in Lucknow

16. (C) The Embassy delegation shared with the BSP its plans for an "America Week" to take place in early September. During the week, a large delegation with members from various sections of the Mission will meet with the media, academics, business leaders and the government. Mishra assured the delegation that the BSP would welcome such an initiative and that an ambassadorial meeting with Mayawati would also be welcomed. Informed that the Chief Minister was planning a trip to California, PolCouns also informed Mishra that the Embassy would like to ensure that Mayawati would be appropriately received should she plan to travel to the US. Mishra thanked the delegation for its consideration and noted that the BSP looked forward to close and long-term ties with the USG.

Comment: One Step at a Time

17. (C) Although this is Mayawati's fourth sojourn as Chief Minister, this is the first time that she enjoys a working majority and the promise of a protracted term in government. Her other tenures were cut short by the demands of coalition politics. While she has an opportunity to accomplish great things, this relative inexperience could undermine her good intentions. Previously, Mayawati's principal concern was managing shaky coalitions and remaining in power. Her party was never in a position to govern. This time, most voters seem happy to have a stable government and to enjoy some

security from rampant criminality and corruption. This ensures that Mayawati will enjoy a longer than usual honeymoon period. Mishra was correct, however, to focus on producing quick results, as the initial enthusiasm can turn to disappointment and then anger if the BSP fails to produce.

Mishra's nonchalance regarding the deep-rooted obstacles facing a UP revival was disconcerting. In our estimation, should Mayawati decide to focus her efforts on becoming Prime Minister in 18 months, she will not be able to succeed in turning around a troubled state like UP. We would have been more reassured if the BSP leadership had put aside plans to take power in Delhi until the 2014 elections and used this interval to focus on the very difficult task at hand.

¶8. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:

(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)

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